

# Advice for Spiritual Travellers

*A simplified guidebook for Mureeds (spiritual disciples) in understanding Tasawwuf*

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“In the Name of Allāh, the Most Beneficent,  
the Most Merciful”



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## Introduction

Spiritual cleanliness, known as *Tazkiyatun-Nafs*, is considered as central to knowledge enlightenment in all traditional Islamic seminaries. Spiritual cleanliness enables the heart to receive goodness, enhance profound understanding in Deen and openness to the true reality of worldly life. It is also essential for non-students of sacred knowledge for it instils resilience to the challenges of modernity and worldly temptations. Giving Bai'ah to a reputable Shaykh is proven to be the most efficacious way for *Tazkiyatun-Nafs*.

This book contains essential guidelines for a spiritual Mureed to gain some familiarity of the science of Tasawwuf. It explains the meaning and aims of Tasawwuf, some understanding around the concept of the soul, and general guidelines for a spiritual Mureed. The book is divided into four parts; Part 1 deals with the nature of Tasawwuf, Part 2 explains the concept of giving Bai'ah and ways of identifying a reputable Shaykh, Part 3 presents some spiritual prescriptions by Shaykhul Hadeeth, Maulana Zakariyyah Kandhelvi ﷺ, for every spiritual Mureed and Part 4 answers some of the most commonly posed questions.

This book is highly recommended and it is hoped that it gains wider readership among those Mureeds who are primitively new to the science of Tasawwuf.

*(Mufti) Abdul Waheed*  
*Spiritual Mureed of Shaykh Mufti Saiful Islām*  
*April 2016/Rajab 1437*



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## Part 1: The Soul, its Nourishment and the Science of Tasawwuf

### The Soul and its Attributes

Believing in the existence of the *Rooh* (soul) distinguishes those who believe in a Supreme Creator from those who do not. Deniers of the existence of the soul fail to recognise God's existence and as a result, live in the world apt to their worldly pleasures. Imām Ghazālī ؒ explains in his most notable works on spirituality, *Ihyā Uloom Ud-Deen*, that the soul is a way to acquire the knowledge of God and His attributes and this is not fulfilled through the bodily organs. This is because once the soul has been purified, one is able to recognise Allāh ﷻ (and His demands). It is the soul that receives reward or punishment or is upright or corrupt. Thus, the one who purifies and nurtures it well becomes fortunate in the end.

(p. 7 vol 3)

Imām Ghazālī ؒ is indicating to a Prophetic Hadeeth wherein the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said, *"Whosoever recognizes himself recognizes his Lord."* Recognizing oneself refers to ones soul because it is the means of attaining closeness to ones Lord and resultantly, all worldly pleasures and luxurious lifestyle mean nothing to him. A great Tābi'ee once said, *"He who recognises his Lord begins to love his Lord and he who becomes insightful of the world becomes ascetic in the world."* (Musannaf Ibn Abi Shaybah)

Recognition of the soul could also imply to ones realization of the After-life for it is the soul that journeys into the next world and then is resurrected for accountability. Allāh ﷻ decrees its final abode based on the individual's deeds. The soul perceives pleasure, comfort or discomfort depending on the manner in which the person nurtured it. Thus the maintenance of the soul requires more attention than the physical body. The

physical body will face death and will be left in this world to be decomposed whereas the soul does not taste death; it remains in a world known as *Ālam Barzakh* until resurrection.

### The Nourishment of the Soul

Like the physical body, the soul also requires healthy nourishment in order to remain resilient towards the worldly temptations. By healthy nourishment we refer to good deeds; obligatory acts that are essential for every Muslim and Nafl (optional deeds) for completeness of ones faith. Nafl also includes daily Dhikr, recitation of the Holy Qur'ān, sending Durood upon the Noble Messenger ﷺ, meditation and so forth. All of these regimens stimulate God-consciousness and piety. In return, one falls in the category of those successful people who meet their Lord with a sound heart, as mentioned in the Holy Qur'ān,

يَوْمَ لَا يَنْفَعُ مَالٌ وَلَا بَنُونَ إِلَّا مَنْ أَتَى اللَّهَ بِقَلْبٍ سَلِيمٍ

**On that Day wealth and children shall not benefit except (for) the one who comes to Allāh with a sound heart. (26:88-89)**

According to Sa'eed Ibn Jubair ؒ, a prominent Tābi'ee among the seven jurists of Madeenah, قَلْبٌ سَلِيمٌ (a sound heart) implies the heart of a believer. Some have stated that it means a heart that is free from Shirk, whilst others assert it to imply it being free from innovations (Bid'ah).

(Tafseer Mazhari p. 72 vol 7)

Nevertheless, all of the various means can apply to the term *Saleem* (sound) since Allāh's ﷻ nature is to mention all-inclusive terms in the Holy Qur'ān. What is important is that Allāh ﷻ makes those people who



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meet Him with a sound heart successful and sound-hearted people are those who have cleansed their soul from all reprehensible traits.

### Purification of the Spiritual Heart

There are many verses and Ahātheeth that emphasise on the importance of the purification of the heart. Some of which are as follows,

1. Allāh ﷻ states;

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسَّاهَا

**Indeed successful is the one who purifies it and the one who corrupts it has failed. (91:9-10)**

Scholars state that this means the one whose heart Allāh ﷻ has purified from immorality and unrefined attributes, until it eventually becomes content with Allāh's ﷻ Divine commands, His remembrance and obedience towards Him, has succeeded in his efforts. The heart then becomes reluctant towards indulging in Allāh's ﷻ prohibitions.

(Tafseer Mazhari p. 271, vol 10)

The Holy Prophet ﷺ used to recite the following supplication

اللَّهُمَّ اِنِّ نَفْسِي تَقْوَاهَا وَزَكَّاهَا اَنْتَ خَيْرُ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا

*"O Allāh Bestow my heart with piety and purify it; You are the best who can purify it."*

2. Allāh ﷻ states in the Holy Qur'ān,

لَمْ قَسَتْ قُلُوبُكُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ فَهِيَ كَالْحِجَارَةِ اَوْ اَشَدُّ قَسْوَةً

**Then your hearts hardened thereafter, thus they (the hearts) became (hard) like a rock or much harder. (2:74)**

The above verse makes direct reference to the Bani Isrāeel who became ungrateful after witnessing certain miracles before their eyes. They disobeyed Allāh ﷻ and persistently tormented His Prophet Mūsa عليه السلام despite Allāh's ﷻ bounteous favours upon them. As a result, Allāh ﷻ hardened their hearts like rocks, in that no goodness perfused into their hearts. Scholars interpret 'hardened' to mean deprived of compassion, mercy, goodness and having long aspirations on the account of forgetting Allāh ﷻ and following their wishful desires. Interestingly, Allāh ﷻ resembles their hearts to a rock as opposed to iron and lead because iron and lead can be softened with fire whereas rock cannot be softened by anything.

(Tafseer Mazhari p. 84, vol 1)

What is noteworthy is that the heart of a person stiffens when it is devoid of God-consciousness. The heart becomes fruitless of any goodness with a gradual replacement of unpraiseworthy traits. One way to instil God-consciousness and piety is to begin with remembering Allāh ﷻ abundantly as possible. Constant remembrance of Allāh ﷻ revives a dead heart and makes it penetrable for goodness and piety.

3. The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said;

اَلَا وَاِنَّ فِي الْجَسَدِ مُضْغَةً اِذَا صَلَحَتْ صَلَحَ الْجَسَدُ كُلُّهُ، وَاِذَا فَسَدَتْ فَسَدَ الْجَسَدُ كُلُّهُ. اَلَا وَهِيَ الْقَلْبُ

*Verily, there is a flesh in the body which, if it is erected then the whole body is erected, but if it is corrupted, then the entire body is corrupted. Nay, it (that flesh) is the heart. (Bukhāri)*



The word الْقَلْبُ linguistically means to shift or switch over. In the Arabic language, it is used to refer to the heart because the heart often shifts between right and wrong and guidance and misguidance. The Hadeeth specifically talks about the heart, as opposed to the brain because the heart is central to the spiritual reformation. This in return induces good moral values. The Hadeeth indicates that uprightness and corruptness of ones heart effects the believer's character. Occasionally, when Allāh ﷻ reprimands the disbelievers for not possessing intellect, it is because of the senselessness of the heart. The heart is blind from seeing the truth due to its corruptness. Thus, the soundness of ones heart pivots the character reformation. (Fathul Bārī pp. 128 –129 vol 1)

In this respect the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ used to frequently recite the following Du'ā,

يَا مُقَلِّبَ الْقُلُوبِ ثَبِّتْ قَلْبِي عَلَى دِينِكَ

*O the Turner of the hearts! Make my heart firm upon Your Religion*

His wife, Sayyidah Umme Salamah ﷺ once enquired from him the reason for reciting this Du'ā so often? His response was, "O Umme Salamah! There is no human except his heart is between the two fingers amongst the fingers of Allāh, He straightens it as He wishes or deviates it as He wishes."

(Tirmizi No: 3522)

I must mention here that no one besides Allāh ﷻ knows the true reality of His fingers. We consign such ambiguities to Allāh ﷻ Himself and we as Muslims, attest to it in faith without dwelling further into the matter. What is important is that the Hadeeth apparently suggests that guidance and misguidance lies ultimately in Allāh's ﷻ Hand. He guides and misguides whomever He wishes. Nevertheless, we should beseech for His guidance through the above supplication and constantly remember Him.

### Reformation of Ones Character

This leads on to another important point that was mentioned earlier about character reformation. The Hadeeth quoted under the previous sub-heading suggests the inter-connection between the heart and external character. Hakeemul Ummah Shaykh Ashraf Ali Thānwi ﷺ used to often say, "I pay more attention to good character and piety than teaching." (Shari'ah & Tareeqat p.7)

The Arabic term for character is 'Khulq' which refers to the external dimension of affairs. Part of reforming ones character is to draw lessons from events around you which is possible only if one possesses internal spiritual eyes. Islām views the uprightness of ones conduct as a reflection of the adornment of the heart.

We all attest to the fact that our beloved Messenger ﷺ was bestowed with the most knowledge over the previous Prophets. He embodied the knowledge and the teachings of all the previous Prophets and completed their message. Yet Allāh ﷻ praises our beloved Messenger ﷺ more so on the account of his good character. Allāh ﷻ states,

وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَّ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ

*Verily, you are of sublime character. (68:4)*

Due to this, we tend to appreciate and recognise him more because of his moral disposition with people, despite the fact that he possessed the most knowledge of Allāh's ﷻ creation.

Thus, reforming the character is pivotal for success in this world and in the Hereafter. There are many Ahādeeth attesting to this,



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Thus, reforming the character is pivotal for success in this world and in the Hereafter. There are many Ahādeeth attesting to this,



The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said,

أَكْمَلُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِيمَانًا أَحْسَنُهُمْ خُلُقًا

*"The most complete believer in terms of faith is the one who has the best manners." (Abū Dāwood No: 4682)*

مَا مِنْ شَيْءٍ أَثْقَلَ فِي الْمِيزَانِ مِنْ حُسْنِ الْخُلُقِ

*"Nothing will be heavier in the scale of a believer on the Day of Judgement than good manners." (Abū Dāwood No: 4799)*

إِنَّ الْمُؤْمِنَ لَيُذْرِكُ بِحُسْنِ خُلُقِهِ دَرَجَةَ الصَّائِمِ الْقَائِمِ

*"Verily a believer merely with his good manners attains the same level as a constant fasting person and a (continuous) establisher of (optional) Salāh." (Abū Dāwood No: 4798)*

In short, the character of a person is something worthy of great honour and importance. It is reformed when the spiritual heart is refined from evil traits. The internal cleanliness induces excellence in ones dealing with others, harmony and peace in life and most importantly, the pleasure of Allāh ﷻ.

### Meaning of Tasawwuf

The obligation of spiritual reformation on Muslims brought about the science of Tasawwuf. Tasawwuf is a specific branch of the Shari'ah which is primarily concerned with cleansing the heart from reprehensible traits. Like other Shari'ah branches and divisions, the science of Tasawwuf evolved over time into a separate discipline to meet the demands of spiritual reformation through systematic regimen prescribed by the spiritual mentor in light of the Shar'ee sources and daily Adhkār. The spiritual

mentor who specialises in treating spiritual illnesses is known as a Shaykh. The function of Tasawwuf is to cleanse the heart from vile traits such as arrogance, ostentation, love for the world and sins of the tongue and to instil praiseworthy traits such as perseverance, gratitude, truthfulness, respect, compassion etc.

Tasawwuf stimulates God-consciousness in all of ones wordily affairs. It induces a completely different outlook of the world in a person. In other words, one begins to realise the true reality of the worldly pleasures and their inevitable outcome, ones attention is diverted more towards the Hereafter and one earns and spends in the Dunya (worldly) only to the extent of their necessities.

Furthermore, the branch of Tasawwuf inculcates good manners in a person in all aspects of their dealing. Ones good manners shall display a reflection of a true believer. One will stand out among the people and become a standard role model for them. Thus, reforming the character of a believer is central to the teachings of Tasawwuf.

Sayyidunā Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ood ؓ said, *"Knowledge is not the name of prolific narratives, rather it is fear (of Allāh)." (I'lāus Sunan vol 18 p. 449)*

Sūfis (experts in Tasawwuf) also say about Tasawwuf,

*"Tasawwuf is all about etiquettes in every time, every state and every place. Whoever holds firm to etiquettes (Ādāb) on every occasion, has reached the highest extent of a man (i.e. an accomplished Sūfi) but whoever despoils it, becomes the furthest from the proximity where he assumes he is and is rejected when he thinks he is accepted." (ibid)*



### The Need For Tasawwuf

Shaykh Ashraf Ali Thānwi ؒ said,

*"After rectification of beliefs and external acts, it is compulsory upon every Muslim to rectify his internal acts. Numerous Quranic verses and Prophetic Ahādeeth attest to the obligation of this. However, many people are heedless of it because of their subservience to their desires."* (The Path to Perfection p. 18)

Every believer is in need of this branch of science if he wants to embody the characteristics of a true believer. It paves the way for him to gain a deep reflection of the Dunya and its reality. It shall strengthen his faith in his Lord, his conviction of the Hereafter and enable him to overcome the difficult challenges he faces.

### The Aims of Tasawwuf

Now that the meaning of Tasawwuf is clear, it must be made explicit that Tasawwuf is not aimed to make the seeker perform miracles. It does not promise worldly gains or apparent increase in earning. It neither guarantees to uplift hardship and afflictions in life. The seeker should not use Tasawwuf to fulfil their worldly aspirations and dreams. It does not promise a comfortable life after attaining spiritual accomplishment. Yet one must also not assume that easiness shall not follow every hardship one faces. It does not result in self-annihilation such that it incurs overwhelming distress.

None of the above are the aims of Tasawwuf. It aims to cleanse the spiritual heart from repugnant traits through spiritual struggle and to replace them with praiseworthy traits in order to attain closeness to Allāh ﷻ and salvation in the Hereafter. It prepares the seeker's faith to become endur-

able to modern challenges, struggle and worldly temptations and moreover, to change their outlook of the eternal life and to help facilitate the true realization of worldly affairs.

### Statements of Scholars about Tasawwuf

1. Junaid Baghdādi ؒ said, *"Tasawwuf is about turning (ones desires) away from the creation to establish a connection with Allāh."* He also said, *"All paths besides the strict following of the Messenger of Allāh are closed to mankind."*
2. Abul Hasan An-Nūri ؒ states, *"Tasawwuf is not the name of accumulation of knowledge rather it is accumulation of moral conduct."*
3. Shaykh Ashraf Ali Thānwi ؒ said, *"Tasawwuf is about disregarding oneself (i.e. the lustful desires)."*
4. Shaykh Ahmad Ali Lahori ؒ said, *"Tasawwuf is to begin with the worship of Allāh, the obedience of the Messenger and pleasing Allāh's creation by serving them."*
5. Mujaddid Alf-e-Thāni ؒ states, *"Tasawwuf is about adhering to the codes of the Shari'ah with sincerity."*

### The Nature of Struggle in Tasawwuf

Treading upon the path for self reformation through Tasawwuf requires struggle to a certain degree. A person can never achieve his goal without having to first struggle and Allāh ﷻ appreciates those who struggle for His cause. He in return, opens many pathways for him on the account of each struggle he undertakes. Allāh states in the Holy Qur'ān,

وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا

**Those who strive in our cause, We shall surely guide them to Our pathways. (30:69)**



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Every believer is in need of this branch of science if he wants to embody the characteristics of a true believer. It paves the way for him to gain a deep reflection of the Dunya and its reality. It shall strengthen his faith in his Lord, his conviction of the Hereafter and enable him to overcome the difficult challenges he faces.

## The Aims of Tasawwuf

Now that the meaning of Tasawwuf is clear, it must be made explicit that Tasawwuf is not aimed to make the seeker perform miracles. It does not promise worldly gains or apparent increase in earning. It neither guarantees to uplift hardship and afflictions in life. The seeker should not use Tasawwuf to fulfil their worldly aspirations and dreams. It does not promise a comfortable life after attaining spiritual accomplishment. Yet one must also not assume that easiness shall not follow every hardship one faces. It does not result in self-annihilation such that it incurs overwhelming distress.

None of the above are the aims of Tasawwuf. It aims to cleanse the spiritual heart from repugnant traits through spiritual struggle and to replace them with praiseworthy traits in order to attain closeness to Allāh ﷻ and salvation in the Hereafter. It prepares the seeker's faith to become endur-

able to modern challenges, struggle and worldly temptations and moreover, to change their outlook of the eternal life and to help facilitate the true realization of worldly affairs.

## Statements of Scholars about Tasawwuf

1. Junaid Baghdādi ؒ said, *"Tasawwuf is about turning (ones desires) away from the creation to establish a connection with Allāh."* He also said, *"All paths besides the strict following of the Messenger of Allāh are closed to mankind."*
2. Abul Hasan An-Nūri ؒ states, *"Tasawwuf is not the name of accumulation of knowledge rather it is accumulation of moral conduct."*
3. Shaykh Ashraf Ali Thānwi ؒ said, *"Tasawwuf is about disregarding oneself (i.e. the lustful desires)."*
4. Shaykh Ahmad Ali Lahori ؒ said, *"Tasawwuf is to begin with the worship of Allāh, the obedience of the Messenger and pleasing Allāh's creation by serving them."*
5. Mujaddid Alf-e-Thāni ؒ states, *"Tasawwuf is about adhering to the codes of the Shari'ah with sincerity."*

## The Nature of Struggle in Tasawwuf

Treading upon the path for self reformation through Tasawwuf requires struggle to a certain degree. A person can never achieve his goal without having to first struggle and Allāh ﷻ appreciates those who struggle for His cause. He in return, opens many pathways for him on the account of each struggle he undertakes. Allāh states in the Holy Qur'ān,

وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا

**Those who strive in our cause, We shall surely guide them to Our pathways. (30:69)**



The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said,

وَالْمُجَاهِدُ مَنْ جَاهَدَ نَفْسَهُ فِي طَاعَةِ اللَّهِ

*The Mujāhid is the one who strives against himself in the obedience of Allāh  
(Baihaqi, Shua'bul Imān No:10611)*

In reality, *Mujāhadah* is a process of perpetual struggle against the relentless egoism from within. *Mujāhadah* prevents the ego from inclining towards the superficial luxuries of the world and indulgence in sins. Moreover, it induces humbleness, servitude towards ones Lord and fear of reckoning on the Day of Judgement.

Though there is no end to spiritual struggle, the Sūfi scholars preliminary recommend reduction in four major things for every seeker;

1. **Reduction in Conversation** - Avoid excessive rambling that is non-beneficial. Excessive talking, especially when it is unnecessary, hardens the believer's heart and deprives one from remembering Allāh ﷻ constantly. Conversations with others must be limited to occasions where it proves beneficial and necessary.
2. **Reduction in Sleep** - Sleeping longer than one is normally required leads to laziness and inactiveness both physically and mentally. It leads to one not being able to worship Allāh ﷻ with full devotion or obey Him in every command. Therefore, one must maintain moderation in sleep whereby they do not neglect it totally nor oversleep.
3. **Reduction in Socializing** - Unnecessary socializing heeds a person from the remembrance of Allāh ﷻ as well. That is not to suggest that all forms of socializing are bad. However, one should carefully choose the right company (those who will remind you of Allāh ﷻ) and secondly, moderation as to not to neglect family rights.

4. **Reduction in Eating** - This aims to controlling oneself in their eating habit and to ensure that one does not wholly satisfy the lower desires. The general guide lines in eating habit are to eat when hungry and stop once you feel your hunger is satisfied even if you can still eat a few extra morsels. In short, one must eat to satisfy the hunger and to satisfy the craving.

### Shari'ah and Tareeqah

A final important point to mention is about the various terminologies used to refer to Tasawwuf. Amongst them is Tareeqah which literally means a path. Some Sūfi scholars use Tareeqah to mean Tasawwuf because in their view, Tasawwuf is an essential medium of recognising the Divine reality of the teachings of the Shari'ah along with its universal benefits. They appreciate what it has to offer to the seeker and how the Shar'ee principles can be applicable in reforming the soul.

This leaves us with the meaning of the term Shari'ah. Shari'ah is a broad term comprising of various sub-branches related to different facets of human living. For instance, the branch specific to the Islamic belief system is known as Aqāid; that which relates to legislative Laws and deriving rulings from the Shar'ee sources is referred to the branch of *fiqh* (Islamic Law); the branch which deals with the sector of spiritual cleanliness and reformation of the character is referred to as Tasawwuf or Tareeqah. It is clear that Tasawwuf is just a fraction of a monolithic Shari'ah, thus, it is incorrect to assume that Shari'ah is limited to Tasawwuf only. What is important to acknowledge is that Tasawwuf is not something foreign to Shari'ah. It deals with a specific aspect of a human which the Shari'ah fundamentally requires us to accomplish.



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## PART 2 – Giving Bai'ah to a Shaykh

### The Four Chains of Tasawwuf

A seeker connects himself to one of the four known spiritual chains of Tasawwuf when he pledges to a Shaykh:

#### *Qadariyyah Chain*

This chain takes its name from the well-honoured Sūfi traditionalist, Shaykh Abdul Qādir Jilāni ؒ. He was a respected scholar and a preacher who taught many students. His name bore the title of the chain after his death and his son, Abdur-Razzāq continued with his father's legacy. The Qadariyyah chain predominated in Irāq, Spain, Turkey, India and Morocco.

#### *Naqshbandiyyah Chain*

This is one of the major spiritual chains in the Sūfi tradition. It is believed that its spiritual lineage traces all the way to the famous Companion, Sayyidunā Abū Bakr Siddeeq ؓ, whilst others argue it traces back to Sayyidunā Ali ؓ. The name takes after its eponym (leader), Bahā-ud-Deen Naqhsband ؒ in the early 14th century. It is the most influential among the Indo-Pak subcontinent scholars. Hence, a seeker associating himself with a Shaykh whose lineage originates from the Indo-Pak subcontinent becomes part of this chain.

#### *Chishtiyah Chain*

This is another famous Sūfi order attributed to a Sūfi master, Khwaja Mu'eenud Deen Chishti ؒ, within the mystic Sūfi tradition that originated in Herat, Afghanistan. Afghanistan was once known to be the hub of

many mystical Sūfi scholars who produced many great Awliyah (friends) of Allāh ؒ. Some say that this was the first of the four Sūfi orders to be established in that region and then it gradually spread throughout South-East Asia. The Chishti Sūfis established their centers throughout the western countries including the United Kingdom. Their primary focus was endurance, tolerance and respect. The Chishti and Naqshbandi orders are currently the most influential orders throughout the world.

#### *Suhrawardiyya Chain*

This chain is attributed to its eponym founder Diyā Ud-Deen Abū Najib Suhrawardi ؒ that is directed under the Shāfi'ee school of law. Its chain stretches back to Sayyidunā Ali ؓ via the two prominent Sūfi traditionalists, Junaid Baghdadi ؒ and Imām Ghazālī ؒ. Though it is a strong Sūfi tradition, it is the least influential compared to the other three.

It must be noted that the objectives of the four chains are respectively the same and validated by the scholars in every generation. The techniques and methods of spiritual regimen varies between the four Tasawwuf schools e.g. loud Dhikr or Dhikr of the heart as well as the issue such as uprooting the spiritual ailments should be prioritized over supplementary Adhkār or vise-versa.

### Understanding Bai'ah

The nature of Bai'ah is overlooked by many Muslims, primarily because of not understanding its true purpose. Erroneous conclusions are drawn because of basing ones judgement on the incorrect practices of others. A golden rule to gain an understanding of the nature of the various Islamic branches, Tasawwuf and Bai'ah included, is to refer to the practices of the



Holy Prophet ﷺ and his noble Companions رضي الله عنهم. The Companions رضي الله عنهم presented a true reflection of the Sunnah practices of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. There are many verses of the Holy Qur'an and Ahadeeth of the Holy Prophet ﷺ that mention and explain the practice of Bai'ah.

The literal meaning of Bai'ah is to "sell". In the old Arab culture, whenever two parties would pledge an agreement with one another, they would hold hands to promise to fulfil the agreement. Mufti Shafee Sāhib رحمه الله defines Bai'ah in the terminology of Shari'ah in the following manner: "The word Bai'ah means to take a promise for performing a special deed. It was the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet ﷺ that both parties would hold each other's hands in order to pledge an allegiance. Once they pledged, it was imperative to fulfil the obligation and breaking it would not be permissible" (Ma'ariful Qur'an). In short, taking Bai'ah means pledging ones allegiance to a qualified Shaykh as a firm agreement in carrying something out e.g. refraining from sins or performing good deeds.

Pledges of allegiance occurred in various forms during the Prophetic era such as participation in Jihād, performance of good deeds and abstinence from all forms of sins or at times upon entering Islām. Evidences of Bai'ah exist in the Holy Qur'an and in many Ahadeeth, some of which are as follows: Allāh ﷻ states, **"Verily those people who pledge their allegiance to you then they are pledging their allegiance to Allāh; the hand of Allāh is above their hands."** (48:10)

**"O' Prophet, when the believing women approach you to pledge their allegiance that they will not associate any partners with Allāh, nor will they steal, nor fornicate, nor kill their own children, nor bring forth any form of slandering that they have devised between their hands and feet, nor would they disobey you in any good**

**(affairs), then accept their pledge and seek forgiveness from Allāh for them; verily Allāh is Forgiving and Merciful."** (60:12)

Sayyidunā Ubādah Ibn Sāmit رضي الله عنه relates, that the Holy Prophet ﷺ was once seated whilst his Companions were seated around him. He said, "Pledge your allegiance to me that you will not associate any partners with Allāh ﷻ, nor will you commit theft, nor will you fornicate, nor will you kill your own children, nor will you bring forth any form of slandering that you produce between your hands and feet, nor will you disobey in any good (affairs)." (Bukhāri)

Sayyidunā Auf Ibn Mālik al-Ashja'ee رضي الله عنه relates that, once there were nine, eight or seven of us with the Holy Prophet ﷺ. The Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "Will you not pledge your oath with the Prophet of Allāh ﷻ?" We extended our hands and said, "Upon what shall we pledge, O' Messenger of Allāh ﷻ?" He replied, "That you worship Allāh ﷻ and associate no partners with Him, and you perform your five daily prayers, and you listen and obey." Then he lowered his voice saying, "And you do not ask anything from others." (The narrator says), "I saw some of these people (who pledged); whenever they dropped their whip (while riding) they would not ask anyone to pick it up for them." (Muslim, Abū Dāwood)

There are many more verses from the Holy Qur'an and the Ahadeeth of the Holy Prophet ﷺ regarding Bai'ah but I have sufficed upon the aforementioned ones for simplicity. From the above mentioned Ahadeeth, many of the prominent scholars, like Shaykh Ashraf Ali Thānwi رحمه الله and Shaykh Muhammad Zakariyyah رحمه الله, have deduced the establishment of Bai'ah in Islām. Moreover, they have stated that it is necessary upon a person to be aware and mindful of ones inner and outer behaviour. This is what Sūfism or Tasawwuf is based upon i.e. the rectification of the soul by



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pledging one's oath to a pious Shaykh. This is also termed as Bai'ah of Tareeqah.

### The Types of Bai'ah

The Holy Prophet ﷺ would pledge allegiance on different occasions from his Companions ﷺ. It was not merely restricted to Jihād or accepting Islām, as it is commonly understood by many people today due to ignorance. The different categories of Bai'ah that the Holy Prophet ﷺ had pledged from his Companions ﷺ are as follows:

Bai'ah Upon Islām: When an individual or a group of people or even a delegation approached the Holy Prophet ﷺ to embrace Islām, then the Holy Prophet ﷺ used to take a covenant or an oath from them.

Bai'ah Upon Jihād: This form of Bai'ah was taken on the occasion of Jihād, for instance, at Hudaibiyah, upon receiving the news of Sayyidunā Uthmān's ﷺ death, the Sahābah ﷺ pledged their allegiance with the Holy Prophet ﷺ to fight against their enemies and avenge the death of Sayyidunā Uthmān ﷺ. Subsequently, the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the Sahābah ﷺ came to know that it was a false rumour. However, Allāh ﷻ revealed some verses in the Holy Qur'ān, expressing His Divine Pleasure in regards to this particular allegiance.

Bai'ah for Caliphate: This type of oath of allegiance was taken upon accepting a new leader for the Muslims in order to pledge obedience to every command of this ruler. This type of Bai'ah occurred after the demise of the Holy Prophet ﷺ when the Sahābah ﷺ unanimously agreed to elect Sayyidunā Abū Bakr ﷺ to rule over the Muslims. The Muslims pledged their allegiance to Sayyidunā Abū Bakr ﷺ that they would obey him in all matters.

Bai'ah Upon Performing Good Deeds: There were some occasions when the Holy Prophet ﷺ would take an oath from the Sahābah ﷺ to perform good deeds, like the Hadeeth of Sayyidunā Auf Ibn Mālik ﷺ mentioned above. There is another Hadeeth narrated by Sayyidunā Jareer ﷺ stating, "I pledged to the Holy Prophet ﷺ upon establishing prayers, giving Zakāt and desiring good for all Muslims." (Bukhāri, Muslim, Ahmad)

Bai'ah to Abstain and Repent from Committing Major Sins (Bai'ah Tawbah): Likewise, there were instances when the Holy Prophet ﷺ took an oath from the Sahābah ﷺ to refrain from major sins. The evidences for this category are mentioned above.

Bai'ah of Tareeqah is based upon the last two categories. From this, we come to realize that Bai'ah and Tasawwuf, were both practiced during the era of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. It should be noted that the term Tasawwuf was not used at that time. It was only after a few centuries that the later scholars adopted the term.

### The Need for Bai'ah

Every human being's body constitutes two things; the physical body and the soul. Many other ideologies, like materialism, are based upon a doctrine that denies the very existence of the soul. On the contrary, Islām teaches us that there is another thing which our religion caters for which is attached to the physical body and that is the soul. Every human being requires food and nutrition in order to sustain life. Allāh ﷻ has endowed us with this gift and it is our responsibility to maintain it. Similarly, the spiritual aspect also requires certain nutrition in order to maintain a healthy state. Allāh ﷻ is the ultimate Benefactor and our Creator and He



knows what our soul requires to be healthy, for instance, establishing our prayers, Dhikr, abstaining from sins etc. It is through the Holy Prophet ﷺ, that Allāh ﷻ has taught us how to maintain it. If the body is not maintained well, then it will not function well and likewise is the soul.

Tazkiyah (rectification of the soul) was one of the major missions and responsibilities of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, as Allāh ﷻ confirms, **"It is He Who has sent amongst the unlettered ones, a Messenger amongst them to recite unto them His (Allāh's) verses, to purify them and to teach them the book and wisdom."** (62:2)

Furthermore, Allāh ﷻ has guaranteed success for those who have strived to rectify and control their evil desires to obey Allāh ﷻ, **"Indeed he has succeeded who has purified his own soul."** (91:9)

The Holy Prophet ﷺ has said regarding the importance of rectifying the soul, "Truly, in the body there is a piece of flesh; if it is upright, then the whole body will be upright and if it is corrupt, then the whole body is corrupt; truly it is the heart." (Bukhāri, Muslim)

This Hadeeth is sufficient to show how important it is to rectify the soul. However, it is not a simple or a straightforward task, whereby a layman can pick up books on spiritual discourses and strive to rectify his soul by himself, through studying without requiring an expert. There are procedures and methods that one must follow in order to undertake the process of reformation and that is to refer to a Shaykh.

If for example, a layman is diagnosed with a severe illness or disease, then in spite of having books and encyclopedias on medicine, this layman would still refer to a doctor. This is because, it is a known fact that if this

individual attempts to search for medical treatment, without any sound knowledge, then such a person will jeopardise his/her own life. In a similar context, there would be a higher possibility for a person to endanger his/her soul, without referring to an expert who can detect the spiritual disease. Giving Bai'ah to a Shaykh is like registering to a doctor to whom a person refers to at times of illness.

A Shaykh is specialized in this field and it is his profession to deal with the illnesses of the soul, through the knowledge that Allāh ﷻ has endowed him with. Therefore, it would be appropriate and wise if a person would take Bai'ah with a Shaykh for the benefit of his/her soul.

### Qualities of a Shaykh

Having said this, a question may arise in the mind of the inquisitive reader that, how can you judge the credibility of a particular Shaykh? How will a person know whether such a person is capable to become a spiritual doctor? Shaykh (Dr.) Muhammad Ismāil Memon has listed in his book, 'The Truth about Bai'ah', the following major requirements for the reliability of a Shaykh:

- He must be very knowledgeable, or at least have the necessary knowledge of Shari'ah, either through academic education, or through the company of the pious and prominent scholars. This is so that he is able to safeguard his Imān, as well as the Imān of his disciples, from false beliefs and from different trials that emerge.
- His beliefs, character, conduct and actions are in accordance with the Holy Qur'ān and the Sunnah.
- He prefers the life of the Hereafter over the life of this world. He



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- His beliefs, character, conduct and actions are in accordance with the Holy Qur'ān and the Sunnah.
- He prefers the life of the Hereafter over the life of this world. He



continuously discharges his personal and social religious obligations.

- He has acquired blessings and benefits from the pious scholars through their continuous company.
- What he does is solely for the pleasure of Allāh ﷻ and not for worldly gain.
- He is kind, compassionate, considerate and graceful towards his disciples. He admonishes them in the best manner possible and if he perceives any faults or mistakes in his disciples, he instantly rectifies their mistakes rather than letting them loose.
- He looks at the overall condition of his followers, to see whether they are practicing according to the Holy Qur'ān and Sunnah or not, or if they prefer the life of this world or the Hereafter.
- The Shaykh is well respected and esteemed by other pious scholars.
- More pious and distinguished people are inclined towards him than the general public.
- By accompanying the Shaykh, it will result in one to remember Allāh ﷻ abundantly within himself and will prefer the love of the Hereafter over the worldly life.
- He himself constantly remembers Allāh ﷻ, as well as encourages others.
- He is not only pious himself, but also competent to attract others towards piety.
- He is proficient in diagnosing the spiritual illnesses and able to prescribe the correct remedies for it, in accordance with the Shari'ah.

### PART 3 – Preliminary Guide for the Mureed (Spiritual Disciple)

The following prescriptions have been taken from a simplified manual guidebook for Mureedeen written by Shaykhul Hadeeth Maulāna Zakariyyah Kandhelvi ﷺ. The guidebook encompasses all the preliminary spiritual regimen a Mureed must begin to practice:

1. To repent sincerely from all the past mistakes and vow to abstain from all major and minor sins. Should one commit a sin, then to atone for it through sincere repentance.
2. To pay off the rights owed to any individual, whether in monetary or physical form. One must ask forgiveness on behalf of any wrong doings committed by them such as, vulgar behaviour, verbal abuse, backbiting, false-accusation, tale-bearing etc. Any financial obligations owed to any person, whether in the form of debt payment, bribe, stealing, pledge, dependants etc must be paid off. Islām does not distinguish between the rights of Muslims or non-Muslims as all are equal before the Laws of Allāh ﷻ when it comes to fulfilling the rights of others. Remember that the accountability of breaching the rights of others is very severe and never forgivable until the servant himself does not forgive. Many people overlook the rights of ones blood relatives in this above regard. This is wrong as relatives have a greater priority in payment of their due right.
3. To ensure to absolve oneself from any previous obligations towards Allāh ﷻ e.g. Qadhā Salāhs or fasts, *Kaffārah* (penalties), Fardh Hajj and so forth. It is a false notion that mere repentance outrights the above obligations.



4. To adhere to the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet ﷺ in all matters including worship, moral conduct with others, domestic habits, manner of eating, dressing, bodily cleanliness and so forth. Note that one must not attempt to follow those Sunnah practices that are beyond ones natural capacity for instance attempting to live a life of poverty. One must instead express love towards it.
5. Not to ridicule the pious servants of Allāh ﷺ which include, the Sahābah and the generations that followed them, scholars and Shuyookh (pl. of Shaykh). Showing respect to them and honouring them is necessary.
6. To recite the Holy Qur'ān daily to the best of ones ability. Memo-risers of the Holy Qur'ān should instil a habit of reciting one Juz daily.
7. To recite Sūrah Yāseen every morning and Sūrah Mulk, Sajdah and Wāqī'ah every night. To recite Sūrah Kahf every Friday and before retiring to bed to recite Sūrah Falaq and Nās and Āyatul Kursi and do *Dam* (blow on to ones hands and pass them over the body thrice).
8. To carry out Qurbāni every year and an additional one for the Mes-senger of Allāh ﷺ.
9. To perform the following *Nawāfil* prayers;
  - a) 2-4 Rak'āts of Ishrāq - which begins instantly after sunrise.
  - b) 2-8 Rak'āts of Chāsht - approximately 1 hour before the begin-ning time of Zuhr prayer.

- c) 6 Rak'āts of Awwābeen - after the Maghrib Fardh prayer. The two Rak'āts Sunnah can also be included in the Awwābeen Salāh.
- d) Tahajjud Salāh - which begins instantly after the Fardh and two Sunnats units of Ishā Salāh. One can pray how ever many Rak'āts as they wish although it is Sunnah to perform 8 Rak'āts during the latter part of the night (during the Suhoor period).
10. To observe the following Sunnah fasts in addition to the Ramadhān fasts to the best of ones ability;
  - a) 6 days of Shawwāl
  - b) First ten days of Dhul Hijjah
  - c) To fast on the Day of Arafah (9th of Dhul Hijjah) for a non-Hāji only.
  - d) To fast on the 10th of Muharram and to pre-fix or suffix one day of fast.
  - e) To fast every Monday and Thursday.
  - f) To fast every 13th, 14th and 15th of every Islamic month. These are known as fasting on the days of *Beedh*.
  - g) To fast in the month of Sha'bān as much as possible, provided that it does not weaken the person to fast during Ramadhān.
11. To recite the Prophetic supplications for specific instances like the Du'a before sleeping, upon waking up, before and after eating, whilst dressing and so forth.



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11. To recite the Prophetic supplications for specific instances like the Du'ā before sleeping, upon waking up, before and after eating, whilst dressing and so forth.



12. To recite the following Adhkār after the Fardh Salāh:

- a) Istighfār three times.
  - b) Āyatul Kuresee.
  - c) Tasbeeh Fātimi - 33 times Subhān-Allāh, 33 times Alhamdulillah and 34 times Allāhu-Akbar followed by the recitation of the fourth Kalimah.
  - d) Sūrah Falaq and Sūrah Nās.
  - e) To make a short Du'ā thereafter. It must be noted that scholars have considered it disliked to engage in long Du'ās after those Fardh Salāhs after which the Sunnah prayers are read. Other than that, it is not disliked to prolong the Du'ā where no Sunnah prayers are to be read after the Fardh Salāh such as Fajr and Asr.
13. To make Dhikr perpetually throughout the day e.g. Lā ilāha illal lāh, Astaghfirullah, Durood, Tasbeeh and Tahmeed. Though one can recite each of the above however much they please, it is advisable to prioritise the daily regimens of Adhkār prescribed by the Shaykh.
14. To self-assess, one's spiritual progression every so often. This can be done by meditating at a convenient time during the day. Scholars recommend meditation after Fajr or before retiring to bed. If one is able to meditate on both occasions everyday then that would prove productive but only for those who are able to do so.
15. It is important to note that the effectiveness of the above regimens become apparent only when one abstains from sinful activities, otherwise continuous indulgence in sin will make the above prescriptions less effective.

#### PART 4 – Answers to Most Common Questions

Generally, the topic of Tasawwuf and giving Bai'ah to a qualified Shaykh is a very comprehensive one. Scholars have written extensively on this subject but much of it is beyond the aims of this book. Our aim in the previous chapters was to present an introduction to this topic alongside basic guidance to steer the seeker into the right direction in the primary stages of spiritual reformation. This is not to overlook some important questions that naturally arise in every seeker's mind when treading on this path. Thus, below we have presented answers to some of the commonly posed questions.

##### Q1: Are there any evidences suggesting having a Shaykh?

A1: Yes there are ample evidences to prove this. The most obvious of which is understanding the mission of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ. The Holy Qur'ān explicates in many verses that the Messenger ﷺ was sent to purify his people which entailed cleansing them from Shirk and immoral character, and to instil righteousness and God-consciousness in them. This is the aim of a qualified Shaykh; to cleanse the heart of his disciples from vile traits and to instil in them the character of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. One verse in particular makes reference to following the path of the one who leads to obedience and servitude to Allāh ﷻ. This includes referring to a qualified Shaykh who in reality guides his disciples to Allāh's ﷻ path. Allāh ﷻ states;

وَاتَّبِعْ سَبِيلَ مَنْ أَنَابَ إِلَيَّ

Follow the path of the one who turns towards Me. (31:15)



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Scholars of Tafseer state that this refers to that which leads towards the obedience of Allāh ﷻ. (Jalālain, p. 347)

The disciple's strong attachment with his Shaykh increases his relationship with his Lord. The Shaykh ensures that he is practicing his faith in the right manner and alerts him of his erroneous behaviour. In doing this, the Shaykh assists his disciple in obeying his Creator.

**Q2: What is the Shaykh's duty in relation to his disciple?**

**A2:** The Shaykh has many responsibilities, some of which are mentioned below;

1. To be vigilant of his disciple's behaviour and alert him when he errs.
2. Not to take unlawful advantage over the loyalty of his disciples.
3. To constantly remind him of the Hereafter.
4. To exhort them towards daily Adhkār, recitation of the Holy Qur'ān etc.
5. Not to over burden them with acts beyond their capacity.
6. To have a dignified presence yet show compassion towards them.
7. To teach them to be respectful and God-conscious at all times.
8. To emphasise on fulfilling their duty towards Allāh ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ.
9. To serve as a role model for his disciples.
10. To teach them their religion.

**Q3: What would you say in regards to those so-called Shaykhs who themselves are guilty of unislamic behaviour and encourage their disciples of that also?**

**A3:** It is farfetched for such a Shaykh to do such a thing. He is not worthy of the title of a Shaykh. One reason for this is that many so-called Shaykhs take unfair advantage of their position, assuming that no one can take them into account for their behaviour. They must realise that Allāh ﷻ is above them, vigilantly monitoring their affairs. However, from an individual perspective, should you notice any unlawful behaviour from such a Shaykh or he asks you to commit a sin, you must not obey him rather you should distance yourself from his company as much as possible. This is because you will imminently fail the objective of spiritual reformation and eventually become embroiled in the *Fitna* of the heart.

**Q4: What are the etiquettes that the disciple must observe towards his Shaykh?**

**A4:** They are as follows;

1. To respect him.
2. To obey him in all lawful matters.
3. Not to overpraise him nor belittle him whether privately or publicly.
4. Not to retaliate against him when he admonishes you over your mistakes.



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5. To assist him when needed.
6. Not to interject when he is speaking.
7. To maintain politeness when talking to him and not raise your voice over his voice.
8. Not to give Bai'ah elsewhere without consulting him first.
9. To choose a convenient time for him for staying in his company.
10. To respond to him when he calls you.

**Q5: Is the Shaykh's status higher than ones parents?**

**A5:** No, the Shaykh's status is not higher than ones parents. Parent's rights take precedence over a Shaykh's right and obedience towards them in all lawful matters is obligatory.

**Q6: How is it possible to differentiate between Sunnah and Bid'ah (innovative) practices?**

**A6:** The concept of Sunnah and Bid'ah is an extensive topic in itself. Many scholars have compiled separate books dealing with this subject alone. However, for the sake of simplicity, the following points should provide a brief overview of understanding Sunnah and Bid'ah. The seeker is suggested to read reliable materials on this subject to gain an in-depth understanding on this issue.

1. Sunnah practices are standardised everywhere e.g. fasting in Muharram or on the Day of Arafah etc; whilst Bid'ah practices are variable between different regions.
2. Sunnah practices are generally agreed upon by the scholars of Islām whereas Bid'ah practices are disputable in nature.
3. Sunnah practices are referenced from authentic sources directly or indirectly whereas Bid'ah has no direct or indirect references from the practice of the first three generations of Islām.
4. Sunnah practices are simple in nature, related to worship or moral ethics. Bid'ah practices tend to be glamorous and over exaggerated.
5. Emphasis on Sunnah practices come from the scholars of Islām, whereas in the case of Bid'ah practices, it is mostly emphasised by the laypeople.
6. A Sunnah act remains the same in every generation as opposed to Bid'ah acts wherein other additions are made every era.
7. Sunnah practices are not generally attractive in appearance whereas Bid'ah acts are.
8. Bid'ah acts are culturally inherited, whereas Sunnah practices have no connection with any particular culture.
9. Adherents to Sunnah practices live a simple lifestyle but a Bid'ati (a person who commits Bid'ah) is generally pretentious over the innovative acts.



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10. An adherent to Sunnah strives to practice Islām in its totality, whereas a Bid'ati follows what suits his wishes and desires. He thus becomes a partial follower of Islām.
11. A Bid'ati never repents from his innovation act and seeks every meaningless interpretation to justify its permissibility.
12. From general observation, most of the participants in Bid'ah rituals tend not to be practicing Muslims, instead they tend to be more culturally oriented.
13. A Bid'ati is the most distant person from Sunnah practices because of his lack of knowledge in it.

**Q7: Is collective Dhikr permissible or is it a Bid'ah?**

**A7:** The permissibility of collective Dhikr has been proven from authentic narrations. Two evidences are presented below;

1. Sayyidunā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه relates that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "Allāh ﷻ states, 'I am with my servant when he thinks of Me and I am with him when he remembers Me; if he remembers Me in his heart, then I remember him in My heart (only Allāh ﷻ, Himself knows the true reality) and if he remembers Me in a gathering, then I remember him in a gathering better than his gathering.'" (Bukhārī, Muslim)
2. Sayyidunā Sahl Ibn Hanzalah رضي الله عنه relates that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "No group of people sit in a gathering to remember Allāh ﷻ therein and thereafter, they stand (in order to leave), except that it is announced to them, Rise; verily, Allāh ﷻ has forgiven you (all)." (Tabarānī)

**Q8: Does a Shaykh receive inspirational thoughts from Allāh ﷻ?**

**A8:** An inspirational thought that is infused in a pious individual's heart is known as *Ilhām* in Arabic. This comes from Allāh ﷻ but does not equate to *Wahi* (revelation) which Prophets receive. The major difference between the two is that *Wahi* becomes a Shar'ee source which the nation are obliged to follow whereas *Ilhām* is not a Shar'ee source nor a legal obligation to follow. It is merely an inspirational thought infused in the heart of a righteous person on a particular instance. It is an exposition of subtle realities on the account of deep reflection of certain issues. *Ilhām* guides the pious individual to the truth so as to remain firm on the straight path and to also guide others on to the true path. This is considered a mercy from Allāh ﷻ and He bestows this upon whomever He wishes.

**Q9: How does one accomplish his spiritual training?**

**A9:** Like seeking knowledge, spiritual struggle is a lifelong journey. No one can attain complete perfection in spiritual accomplishment. However, this is not to suggest that one cannot achieve the primary stages of spiritual reformation. The criteria in completing ones spiritual training and then, to become a mentor for others, is as follows;

1. Increase in daily Adhkār.
2. Abstention from major sins and not to be perpetual on minor sins.
3. Increase in God-consciousness.



4. Having a strong attachment with ones Shaykh and the company of the pious people.
5. Adherence to the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet ﷺ.
6. Disassociation from the worldly luxuries.

**Q10: Is giving Bai'ah to a Shaykh an obligatory act?**

**A10:** It is not obligatory per-say like Salāh, Zakāt etc, however, what is obligatory is that every individual must cleanse their soul from reprehensive traits. Giving Bai'ah to a Shaykh will instil God-consciousness and preparation for the after-life. General experience suggests that giving Bai'ah to a reputable Shaykh proves to be the most effective way of self-purification due to a number of factors;

1. One relies on experts in the discipline as opposed to self-reliance.
2. The Shaykh will detect even the subtle symptoms of spiritual illness when the individual cannot.
3. One gains a deeper understanding of deep reality of the worldly life under the guidance of a Shaykh as opposed to reading books.
4. The Shaykh sets the limits for moderation in the discipline. A self-studied individual is more likely to commit excess and overwhelm himself.
5. A spiritual mentor embodies a true reflection of following Islām in the true light. This assists the disciple in understanding Islām properly.



# ADVICE FOR SPIRITUAL TRAVELLERS

Spiritual cleanliness, also known as Tazkiyatun-Nafs, is considered central to knowledge enlightenment in all traditional Islamic seminaries. Spiritual cleanliness enables the heart to receive goodness, enhance profound understanding in the Deen and openness to the true reality of worldly life.

This book contains essential guidelines for a spiritual Mureed to gain some familiarity of the science of Tasawwuf. It explains the meaning and aims of Tasawwuf, some understanding around the concept of the soul, and general guidelines for a spiritual Mureed. This is a highly recommended book and it is hoped that it gains wider readership among those Mureeds who are basically new to the science of Tasawwuf.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Shaykh Mufti Saiful Islām born in 1974 is a traditionally trained scholar. He memorised the Holy Qur'ān at the age of 13. He studied the Arabic language and various other traditional Islamic sciences at Dārul Uloom, Bury, UK, under many auspicious scholars notably, Shaykh Muhammad Yūsuf Motala. There he received authorisations in various books including the six major books of Ahādeeth. He studied Iftā under one of the senior Muftis in the UK, Shaykh Mufti Shabbir Ahmad.

In 1996 Shaykh Mufti Saiful Islām established Jāmiyah Khātamun Nabiyeen (JKN). Today, JKN has accelerated to become recognised worldwide as an institute of learning. As well as the Founder, Principal and Director of JKN, Shaykh Mufti Saiful Islām took up responsibilities in many other departments locally, nationally and internationally.

He is the Editor of the famous family magazine Al-Mu'min. He currently holds the posts as the President of Tawak'kulia Jāmi Masjid in Bradford and Chairperson of Al-Kawthar Welfare Foundation. He is also the Patron of Al-Mu'min Primary School and Olive Secondary Schools in Bradford.